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A N  
E S S A Y  
O N  
MODERN LUXURIES.

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Price SIX-PENCE.



AN  
ESSAY  
ON

Tea, Sugar,  
White Bread and Butter,  
Country Alehouses,  
Stong Beer and Geneva,  
AND OTHER  
MODERN LUXURIES.

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LUXURIA. ——— SÆVIOR ARMIS

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SALISBURY:  
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MDCCLXXVII.





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## To the READER.

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*Courteous Reader,*

**I**F thou hast ever thought it worthy while to take a moment's observation at some Country Fair, of an Exhibition of Monsters and Wild Beasts, thou mightest have seen the General Receiver *Pickle Herring* try to raise a laugh among the mob, by the oddity of his actions and appearance. A well-blown shake from his old batter'd trumpet assembles a whole croud of gazers, who, tempted by his merry tricks and earnest invitations, press in to see the inhabitants of his famous *Menagerie*. But when they have passed the door-keeper, all ridicule is at an end; the scene becomes more grave and serious; and the spectator is seized with horror at the tremendous sight of Lions, Bears, and Tigers.

To the R E A D E R.

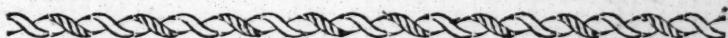
To such a scene thou may'st perhaps compare the Book now in thy hand, *after* thou hast perused it;—for from a Title of such singularity, thou mightest expect something of humour *within*; yet, be assured thou wilt be deceived in thy expectation.

It would be happy for mankind, if no other beasts existed, than those which were really so by the production of Nature; yet it is possible, that they may *here* be found—in human shape.

Thus much by way of Preface.—  
If thou hast "*Curiosity*," if thou hast any "*better motive*," to know the cause of Evils, and their Remedy,—  
read on—



AN ESSAY ON  
MODERN LUXURIES.



 Very ingenious and sensible author\* hath observed, that “the causes of the present high price of Provisions take their origin partly from the increase of our national debt, and partly from the riches of private persons; or in other words, from the poverty of the public, and the wealth of individuals;” to which permit *me* to add, as speaking of persons and things in the lower class of life, that Fine Flour, and Bread and Butter, together with Tea and Sugar, to which I subjoin Spirituous Liquors, as Geneva, &c. and Ale-house Strong Beer, are the foundation of almost all the poverty, and all the evils which affect the labouring part of mankind, and are replete with all the miseries and misfortunes which can possibly issue from *Pandora's* box.

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\* See Thoughts on the Causes of the high Price of Provisions.

*Extravagance* may perhaps be defined, by our expences exceeding the bounds of our annual income, or private fortune; and it certainly may be stiled *Impropriety* and *Indecorum*, when we aim at things either too high or inconvenient for us. This may be done by a variety of methods:----For instance; the *Nobleman* may bring ruin on himself and his fortune, by a seraglio of immodest women, by horse-racing, and gaming; the *Country 'Squire* may imitate the *Nobleman*, not only in the last-mentioned superfluities, but in many others---as in dress, equipage, and jewels; and if the poor *Rustic*, who hath nothing to supply the necessaries of life, but the labour of his hands, expends that labour in Tea, Sugar, White Bread, and Butter, or (what is still worse) in Alehouse Strong Beer, or Spirituous Liquors, every one will judge that he doth not act (any more than his *Betters*) within his proper sphere, and that he certainly is, to all intents and purposes, void of management and œconomy. If, then, the poor Countryman hath any regard to the comeliness or propriety of things, or would entitle himself to the pity and compassion of his fellow creatures, he would cautiously avoid those expensive articles.



But how notoriously do the poor man's actions contradict the sentiments and principles of the prudence and conduct of a good house-keeper? Not the *fine*, but the *very finest* Flour, which French stones have most artfully wrought, in mills constructed with the most curious fabrication, and with all the ingenuity which human invention can execute---even these are not satisfactory to indulge the luxury of the meanest artificer in the woollen manufacture.

Were we to make use of the cool voice of reason on this subject, and descant on the nature, end, and design of Providence on this occasion, the Mechanic would with a sneer tell us, it is all a joke; that he and his friends prove their good understanding, by being nourished from the fat of the land; that Providence most certainly intended the very best of his gifts for the ingenious Artificer, and that for his own part, he never yet met with any thing too good for himself.

But, under favour, did not Almighty Providence intend,---doth not Nature and the Health of the world, by experience (a proof not to be contested) declare---that the fine Flour, without a mixture, is costive; and that the Bran has a contrary quality; and therefore that the due mixture of each

is the proper medium for the human system? Tell me not that the laborious Workman requires substantial, strong, costive, finest Flour; that he must be kept in the highest spirits, and live like a running horse, or like one maintained by the quintessence of drams. Excuse me, the position is an entire fallacy, and hath nothing but malignant luxury for its plea;---*that* luxury which tends to the ruin of the constitution of himself and family, and is in truth one of the greatest misfortunes of the people of the Southern part of *England*, and is indeed attended with much worse consequences than are generally conceived.

Look, if you please, on the robust, hardy *Laplander*;---cast your eyes still nearer; see the healthful, firm *Higlander*: They will mutually inform us, that their poor fare aspires no higher than the plain, coarse, Oaten Cake; and yet, between the two rivals, the powers, the strength, the vigour, the capacity for labour and fatigue of the body, bear no proportion.

About half a century ago, every house-keeper in the country bought his wheat at the market, nay even a bushel at the barn door, without giving umbrage to the all-engrossing Miller. But now, the times are changed; and it is a glaring truth, that we

are now compelled to eat what is called *White Bread*, composed partly of fine Flour, with other ingredients concealed within the mystery of the Baker ; as witness the lime, the chalk, the allum, with others perhaps less wholesome, which often make their way through the vehicle called the Mill.

Does it not then deserve the care of the Legislature to prevent such enormous, such deadly grievances ; to guard against calamities, thus big with misery to the constitution, health, and consequently to the happiness of his Majesty's subjects ? It might be done, by confining the business of a Miller to that which is his proper office ; I mean solely to that of *grinding* corn, and fixing on them a very heavy penalty (not less than 100*l.*) for every *Sale*, much or little, either of meal or flour of any kind, on any pretence whatsoever. This would prevent the mischief (and a great one it is) of eating nothing but fine Flour. It would cause all persons, without distinction, to eat a proper proportion of wholesome Bran, which is at this time almost entirely consumed by hogs and horses, and which, in seasons tending to a scarcity, is a very substantial loss, in as much as it is a dissipation of a fifth part of the staff of life, and is therefore a means of converting it to the use of beasts, instead of rational creatures,

and may in some sense be said to create an artificial famine.

Waste at all times ought to be avoided, especially when that waste has a tendency to bad health: When the necessaries of life are not plentiful, oeconomy directs us to use them to the best advantage; but the rule is inverted, and the Flour Mills (for they are properly so called) deprive the human body of the benefit of the Bran.

From hence it comes to pass, that my *Motto* is but too justly verified, and we can with truth say, that the fine Flour of the country, (or if you please) the fine alum, the fine lime, the fine hotch-potch of the mill, destroy more of its inhabitants than all the swords and fire-arms now wielded in *America*.

If these suggestions are devoid of truth, pray tell me, why doth the bread in the Metropolis, and some other great towns, from the oven resemble the softness of sponge, and the subsequent morning become dry, starchy, and almost as hard as a bone?

I fear this dry contagion hath spread itself deep into the country, to the village, and to the cottage; as their fine Flour



Bread doth not retain the moisture formerly experienced in the honest, wholesome, dark-brown loaf of the ancient country house-keeper.

Not content with *sine bread*, the poor country cottager pampers her appetite, by covering it with *butter*; and her thirst must be solaced with the juice of the leaves of that Indian shrub, (which I most heartily wish had never found an entrance into these kingdoms) commonly called *Tea*.---Hysterics, a disorder unknown to former ages, but now the Idol of the Medical Fraternity, take their source from this noxious herb.

From the first introduction of *Tea*, *Scandal*, heretofore a stranger amongst generous *Englishmen*, travelled from *China*, inclosed in the canister. To be serious; it most certainly disposes the drinkers of this bitter herb, to peevishness, moroseness, and ill nature; it creates ill blood; it enervates the constitution; and can we wonder after this, that, instead of a generous, liberal conduct, it should spit its venom and rancour by an overflow of defamation, on the characters of our deserving neighbours?---It unstrings the nerves, it unbraces the constitution, dissolves nature, and destroys the

*Englishman.* To these we may add another pernicious Foreigner, called *Sugar*,---which not only inflames the poor man's expences, but his blood and vitals also. If you please, then, join them all together, and compute the expence, the loss of time taken in breaking and washing the dishes, sweetening the tea, spreading the bread and butter, the necessary pause which defamation and malicious tea-table chat afford, and they will largely account for half a day in winter, spent in doing that which is worse, very much worse than doing nothing.

Where are now the pleasing smiles, the dimpled damask cheek, which were accustomed to dance on and adorn the jocund face of the artless, chearful, innocent Country Girl? Instead of these, succeed the haggard, yellow, meagre visage,---no more the delight of the honest, jolly Swain, no more the blooming blessing of the healthful, loving husband. The goodly countenance becomes a sacrifice to *Indian* melancholy, and her sprightly gaiety to pensive languor.---- Loss of appetite, sickness, and a puny race of children, are the wretched consequences of this pernicious liquor; and these at last bring the man and his family to the parish, and fix them as a dead weight on the landed interest for life.

If these are the blessed effects of drinking *Tea*, who would not be contented with *English Small Beer*, or *Leek Pottage*? If these cannot be obtained, happy is the man who drinks the pure *Element*, which every village supplies, and counts it luxury.

Grievous, however, as this evil of *Tea* may be, the calamity to the public is trifling, when compared with those of the brimful guilt and wickedness of the *Ale-house*: Who can describe the horrors of infamous ebriety? What can compensate for that invaluable blessing right Reason? Let the debauched, raving Bacchanal stand forth, and tell me, if he can, the blessing which is purchased by the loss of his understanding. If Reason and Reflection were given us by the Divinity as our greatest glory, blessing, and happiness, surely the deprivation of them is to debase ourselves lower than the beasts which perish. No one who thinks, would ever put that into his mouth, which will certainly be the means of stealing away his senses.--- But, strange as this absurdity may appear, daily, nay hourly experience evinceth this monstrous truth, and with loud voice echoes, that Human Nature and Reason are drowned in *Strong Beer*.

But if human nature debased, if want of education and good manners permit the *lower* class of creatures, in the shape of men, to destroy their intellects by intoxication and debauch, what shall we attribute to those hands and heads of a *superior* order, who shall sign *an instrument*, which in words condemns the practice, but in truth and experience encourages and promotes the vice?

No---for the future, let the hand tremble before it gives the signature to so deadly an evil, as that of a *Licence to keep an Alehouse*; let the heart recoil, before it indites so dreadful an instrument!---Surely, no worthy Divine, who declaims against Ebriety in the pulpit, can possibly be so absurd as to promote this loathsome vice, by signing a Permit to encourage it! Neither his good sense, his good manners, nor that sacred book called the Bible, (his profession and his study) can possibly countenance so gross a contradiction. If he loves the public weal, certainly he will not strengthen the hands of its greatest enemy; if he has any regard to decency and good manners, he will avoid the means of exposing human nature in loathsome deformity; and if the fear of the Almighty, whom he professes to adore, is in any degree the object of his



fenfes, he will not wantonly scatter fire-brands, arrows, and death.

In the Metropolis, the *Spunging-house*, the *Bawdy-house*, and *Ale-house*, are the resort and hiding-places of Cut-Throats, Gamblers, Highwaymen, and Pickpockets;---nor are the Country Alehouses less forward in giving their assistance. At these places men of infamous character assemble, like filth and dirt in a common shore. Here the unsuspecting Countryman imbibes the first sentiments of a dissipated life; he is taught to game, drink, swear, and to prefer a course of idle pleasures, to virtuous and honest industry. Labour soon becomes hateful; yet his pleasures must be supported; and he therefore resolves to make the property of others subservient to this purpose. Hence the frequency of burglaries, robberies, and murders, throughout every part of the kingdom.

Our assize calendars present us with a melancholy catalogue of offences, the perpetrators of some of which are doom'd to the ignominy of a public execution: yet to what purpose? Has the Gallows ever yet been found to check the progress of vice among the people? I am persuaded it has not; and I will venture to assert it never

will, while those hot-beds of iniquity, the Country Alehouses, are suffered to be so numerous.

It is true, we make laws against Robberies, Murders, and a long catalogue of other crimes, in general well calculated for the civilization of the subject : Why then is the *Ale-house* placed, as it were, in defiance of those wholesome laws, or set like a trap, to draw mankind into misery ; to take away his reason, and make him forfeit his innocence and his life, by the breach of those laws. If Vice and Immorality, Treason, Robbery, Drunkenness, Murder, and all kinds of vice and wickedness, are to be promoted and encouraged, direct the Magistrates (as at present) to persist in licensing two or three Ale-houses in almost every parish ; but in this case, methinks, Generosity, nay Justice, should also direct Government, to repeal, and make a general blaze of all the Penal Statutes. On the other hand, if his Majesty's most gracious Proclamation against Vice, Profaneness, and Immorality, is seriously to take place, permit no Alehouse to exist, within *four* miles of any Market Town.

It is most certain that in Alehouses, all all kinds of Felonies are invented and contrived : these are the receptacles of the De-

stroyers of that Game which the Country Gentleman is so emulous of preserving! and here they lavish away that money, which ought to be the support of their indigent wives and helpless children, who are perhaps crying for bread to satisfy the wants of nature!

If it really was true, that private Vices are public Benefits, even in that case, every man of feeling would shudder at being the cause of introducing so much misery and ruin to any one individual; but as this argument consists merely in sophistry, and in the sound of words, let the inventor enjoy the Castle which he has built in the Air; and if he insists on it as a fact, he may take it for his satisfaction, that the public never was in a more happy, more prosperous, more flourishing condition than at the present moment. But as the poor rates increase, notwithstanding an amazing trade in the woollen manufacture, that gentleman must excuse me, although I altogether dissent from his opinion in this particular.

The Legislature hath for some years past been attempting methods to ease the lands in some measure of the burthen of the Poor Rate, but without effect. In the name of wonder, why do they not put down the *Alley-house*, which, with the circumstances above-

mentioned, are the cause, the bitter springs from whence not only all our Poverty, but almost all our loss of morals flow? *Take away the Cause, and the Effect ceases*, is a trite adage; and is any thing more obvious, than that these are the Causes which produce those Effects? It is an old observation, that Luxury and Poverty are concomitant and reciprocal; and it is without a doubt true, they naturally follow and reflect each other.

The hieroglyphic of Poverty in high life perhaps may be denoted by the appearance of a gloomy, meagre, lank, staring visage, with half a nose; or by a skeleton in a loose, superb, embroidered thread-bare coat, covered with tarnish'd lace and fancied gewgaws, with the pockets turned inside out.---In low life, see the mad, ranting, roaring Reprobate Clown, with his right arm elevated, and much extended; with a mug in one hand, spilling its contents on the party who holds it, with a stupid, mawkish, maudlin grin, and the tongue hanging out of the mouth, in a tatter'd, greasy coat, appearing as a compound of dirt and rags, squalid wretchedness, and deformed nastiness.

The former of these figures affords ground for our contempt, because he is supposed to



be conscious, and therefore capable of evil; the latter highly deserves our pity, because the want of education, and the neighbouring inviting Alehouse, ensnar'd and intic'd him into the commission of those disasters, which not a little reflect on the character, and perhaps may hereafter increase the punishment, of those who were the authors of them.

Notorious sufficiently it is, that the poor man is seldom wanting in the observation of one text of Holy Writ, viz. "Take no thought for to-morrow;" like the sailor, he not only parts with the last penny in his pocket, but even mortgages the wages of the next week; and what hopes can there be of a reformation, whilst the cause of all his misfortunes, the misery, the ruin, the destruction of his family is situated within *an hundred*, perhaps within *fifty paces* of his own door.

The good man of the parish may every Sunday discourse pathetically against vice, profaneness, and immorality; he may even go further, and descend to the particular vices of drunkenness, lewdness, and the breach of the Sabbath; but alas! the temptation is convenient, and prevalent; and the Clergyman is but in too much danger of reading a *wall lecture*, whilst his parish-

ioners, who ought to be attendant on him at church, are almost generally assembled at the Red Lion, the Half Moon, and the Boot.

To maintain my first proposition, Luxury is the cause of the misery of many characters, both in high life and in low. In the first, dissipation, dress, whoring, and gaming; and in the last, the cravings of corrupt nature, debauch, inadvertency, and frequent temptations, take place of reason and common sense; and thus the worthy clergyman of a country parish, and the honest country gentleman, are loaded with enormous charges to the poor rates, which with other taxes, almost sink themselves and miserable families to unavoidable necessity and indigence.

As well may we expect happiness without virtue, as œconomy and industry in a parish, burthened and incumbered with Alehouses. Where these abound, the lands of course decrease in their annual value, the poor at all events become more and more numerous, and a vein of idleness and dissipation certainly flies through the whole parish.

A certain parish, which I have now in my eye, is an abundant proof of the truth

of these assertions. I remember it once gay, happy, flourishing and prosperous; few were the inhabitants who were then burthen some to the lands, for the lands very near by labour supplied the poor with necessaries. Within sixty years past, this parish paid not more than twelve rates per year to the poor; the complexion of things is now most disagreeably changed, and the twelve are multiplied to one hundred and twenty-four. In short, this parish is now become partly a portion for Alehouses, and partly an emolument to *his Worship's* cousin, who supplies them with malt. Idleness, drunkenness, and sloth, have taken place of honest industry, frugality, and labour. The Sundays are spent at the Bell, the Half Moon, and the Boot; the Saturday nights in the destruction of the neighbouring game. The love of Strong Drink, within a very few years past, in this parish prevailed over the natural affection which was due to the poor man's child; the babe perished for want of bread, and through the cruelty of a wicked step-mother, addicted to Spiritous Liquors. The man and his wife were tried, convicted, condemned, and executed. Hear, remember, fear, tremble, read this, all ye who delight in Strong Beer, lest ye also become unnatural, starve your offspring, and suffer an ignominious death!

True as all this most certainly is, methinks it is amazing that any gentleman of landed property should think of encouraging these deadly evils. Let the military Contractor, let the Merchant who makes his market from the rise of his saleable commodities by an additional tax, bellow till their lungs crack, for *War* ! for *War* ! Let the trading J-----ce, who swears hard to prove his official qualifications, and goes snacks with his Clerk, in defiance of the intention of a most wholesome act of parliament ; let him travel like a mountebank, and scatter his poison, by signing numbers of licences for Alehouses, in different divisions ; but the gentleman of a landed fortune, if he is *wise*, will pray for *Peace* ; and if he would lessen the payment of the poor rates, will undoubtedly suppress every Alehouse, not only in his own parish, but also in all his adjacent neighbourhood. If *Morality* and *Religion* have no influence, yet *Interest* should direct every Magistrate, rarely, very rarely, to sign that instrument, which in its consequence extinguishes not only every virtuous, every religious sentiment, but with very large strides tends to impoverish his fortune.

But is noone so much a friend to the Public, to Virtue, Religion, and good Sense, as to attempt the suppression of these evils, so



repugnant to morality, and so productive of every kind of wickedness? Believe me, though the public is grieved beyond measure by these nuisances, yet no one has courage sufficient to execute the office of an *informer*; and although nothing is so easy as to increase the number of Ale-houses, yet nothing is so difficult as to suppress even one of them. To erect an Ale-house, property, not the want of it, pleads in a man's favour. Again, if the party is poor, old, or decrepid, even *charity* is made an excuse, for granting a Licence to the poor man, although at the peril of the ruin of the whole parish.— Infamous! that the most noble of all Virtues should be prostituted to countenance the greatest of all Evils.

I have known an additional Licence granted to a wealthy Farmer, who was, at the time of obtaining it, possessed of more than Sixty Pounds a year, although the parish contained not more than Seventy Houses, although it was situated within three miles of a large Market Town, and further, although it even enjoyed the Blessings of Two other such great benefits, before the Justices in their goodness endowed them with the happiness of a Third.

Are we then to wonder, that the Poor-Rates are very largely increased, or should

we not rather wonder if the fact was otherwise ?

The poor people do not now carry on life, as they did formerly. They were then honest, industrious, sober, frugal, and careful; the day was spent in labour, and the night in restoring nature by refreshing sleep; they were contented to live at the smallest expence, and instead of *Tea* and *Bread and Butter*, and the *finest Flour*, the woman of the house seldom knew any greater repast, than bread made of an equal mixture of Bran and Flour, and happy, very happy to arrive at this ! *Butter* was then a Stranger to the poor man's house, and *Cheese* to him unknown, except that kind which is term'd *skim* : As to an *Ale-house*, it was very rarely seen in country parishes, and never without particular reasons, and for very particular purposes. How common in those days, for the man and his wife to breed a family of *five* or *six* children, without being petitioners for relief to the parish ; how usual in the present, to apply to the Overseers, even tho' there are but *two* !

It seems by this time pretty clear, why the Poor Rates are so largely increased, as even upon an average to double, nay treble those of sixty years past ; and that the best method of reducing them is, if possible, to reduce the luxury of the age. Let every

poor family which drinks *Tea*, be erased from the Poor Books, as well as the party, who (according to the statute of the 8th and 9th of King *William*) refuseth to wear the *badge*. Let good, wholesome, plain, coarse bread, with a due mixture of bran and flour, again be introduced, and if the poor man will not be at the pains of making it at his own house, permit not the Baker, on any pretence whatsoever, under a very heavy penalty, to sell any better (pardon me) I mean any *finer* bread. Let no *Alehouse* exist in any parish, within four miles of a market town, and let no one, except an Apothecary, be suffered to sell any quantity of Spirituous Liquors, in any parish four miles distant from such market town; let the Apothecary's permit extend no further than for the medicinal use, and under the idea of relieving sickness.

The buz is already in my ears,---what strange doctrine is all this, and more particularly that relating to *Alehouses*? What, destroy his Majesty's revenue, especially at a time of so great a demand for supplies, in order to suppress his unnatural subjects in *America*? Pardon me; his Majesty hath not a better subject than myself. He who recommends religion, decorum, and morality, will always be foremost in his duty to his Prince, and in obedience to Government.

I would not in any degree decrease the revenue ; on the other hand, I do abhor the idea of debauching mankind, and thereby introducing Atheism in a christian country. My scheme is a total suppression of *Alehouses*, in parishes not further distant from market-towns than *four miles* ; and, if you please, let the Inns and Alehouses in those towns supply the deficiency of stamps, which must attend such destruction of *Alehouses*, by adding forty shillings to the stamp of every such Inn and Alehouse. If this doth not adequate the deficiency, add another six-pence to the sale of every new Pack of Cards ; (for both the gentlemen and ladies will readily pay for their diversion, and will take care not to be out of pocket) and if any sum shall remain wanting, place an additional ten shillings on every hoghead of imported wine : All these together will certainly compensate for more than the loss sustained in not licensing Country Alehouses ; and by this means the purity of the morals of countrymen at least, will be preserved ; vice and debauchery will, as it were, be confined to cities and market-towns, and the health and reformation of manners of the honest countryman, will again be restored to *Old England*. Permit me further to say, that if the father of the family lives not within the reach of the Sign-post, both himself, his wife, and children will enjoy the comfort of wholesome, home-brewed



small-beer, instead of water, which will in some degree answer to the Revenue for his own particular extravagance to the Alehouse, and balance the account to the public for the deficiency of the excise on Malt.

Whatsoever very evidently affects the Landed Interest, must in consequence affect Government; for the tax on lands is the support of government and the police, in a more principal ratio and degree than any other tax whatsoever. There is a mutual connection between real and personal, or in other words, between the landed and monied interest of this kingdom: A circumstance which materially and essentially burthens the lands, must also be very sensibly felt in the Funds, and Change Alley; and when the credit of the lands is depreciated, by the addition of two or three shillings in the pound to the Poor Rate, the capacity of an additional shilling, or even six-pence, to the land tax, becomes impracticable. It is sufficiently obvious, that stocks must fall, when Government is without a foundation for raising another tax, and more especially when the lands are no longer a resource as an additional fund for the support of the State; the credit of the monied interest must at events sympathize, and be annihilated and absorbed. If therefore the Alehouses are the cause in country

parishes of raising the Poor Rates to the amount of two shillings in the pound, (as they most undoubtedly are) doth it not concern Administration to prevent this mischief, by their total abolition, in all parishes four miles remote from any market towns? This calculation, in my opinion, is not by any means exaggerated, nor doth it in any sense exceed the truth; but lest this account should savour of fallacy, let the present enormous Poor Rates be compared with the trifling ones of sixty years past, when the Alehouses were few, and when thus compared, let them speak as my vouchers.

It is a datum in the system of œconomy, that a great number of persons brought together in one family, and supported under the same roof, is maintained at less expence, than is the smaller in proportion. The inconvenience from Alehouses is therefore not so great to large market towns, as their numerous poor is always under a better regulation, and maintained at a smaller expence, by virtue of the opportunity of the mansion called the *Work House*; a method of support not applicable to smaller parishes.

However convenient or beneficial Workhouses may be, when applied to the purpose of one or two parishes, permit me to

doubt of their utility, when they become the extensive objects of a whole county. The former are schemes confined to a very moderate number of persons, and therefore are under the superintendancy of a very few, whose particular interest prompts them to contrive the best and cheapest means for their maintenance and support; the latter favour too much of a national undertaking, are too complex, are loaded with salaries, and if put in execution, may rather turn out lucrative jobs to fill private pockets, than sensible methods to ease the lands in the burthen of the Poor Rates.

To avoid any further speculation on these matters, one thing seems to be self-evident; it is, that drunkenness produceth disorders in the body, as well as mind; that this evil hath a tendency to poverty, as well as riot, and breach of the peace and good management of government itself, which sometimes occasions the effusion of blood, by calling in the military to the assistance of the civil power.\*

Was there then no Alehouse, few would I think be poor, few impotent, and incapable of supporting themselves, save those who became such by accident or sickness; and I think that even decrepid old age might by virtue of a life well spent in honest la-

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\* The Riot at Shepton Mallet.

bour and industry, supply such an affluence against the winter of its days, as to enable the party to guard against the griping hand of poverty, and cause his hoary hairs, gently to go down to the grave in tranquillity and peace. A comfort not to be expected from midnight revels, gluttony, and debauch.

So great and interesting is the consequence of the suppression of Alehouses; so numerous are the advantages both to body and soul.

Several ingenious Writers † have observed, that the purposes not only of the public, but of the poor also, are then best answered, when the price of provisions keeps a near proportion to the price of labour. They say, the poor will work no longer than they can by their labour supply themselves with the necessaries of life; that their extra gains are absorbed in an Alehouse, and that high wages, and a cheapness of provisions, are generally the parents of sloth and idleness. Admit, if you please, the truth of these positions: remove the Alehouse, and the opportunity, the temptation of getting drunk, as well as the power of spending the poor man's extra two-pence, are removed likewise. In other words, he preserves his understanding, as well as his constitution, to the great comfort of him-

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† Sir Wm. Temple, Sir Wm. Paulett, Sir Josiah Child, Mr. Pollexfen, Mr. Gee, Dr. Franklin, Mr. Locke, &c.



self, his wife, and family. Human Nature in many, would in this case exert herself in honest labour; for mean and groveling is that disposition, which will sit with arms across, when health, when gain, when interest, and every other worthy motive, call him from a state of idleness and inactivity, to that of exercise and fatigue, which (permit me to say) is the proper refreshment both of mind and body.

It is a most notorious truth, that virtuous industry will accomplish most surprizing performances. How often do we find, that labour properly exerted, and employed by man and wife, will by the sweat of the brow, joined to economy and cleanliness, preserve a family of six children from the parish; whereas the negligence, the dissipation, and dirtiness of another pair, under just the same circumstances, with regard to their support in life, viz. that of a good constitution, and the labour of their hands, will oblige them to apply to the Overseers for relief, even although they have not more than half, nay not more than two to maintain? I mention cleanliness as an essential circumstance of a good housekeeper, and the utility and good effects of it, in the conduct of a family, are more and greater than can easily be imagined. To a poor man, it makes his home healthful, and consequently prevents the disorders which always attend squalid slut-

tishness. It makes the house more chearful, and therefore more pleasing to the inhabitants: in a word, it makes the husband to delight in staying at home, and the wife to rejoice in the operation of her hands, and it is an adage not I think without some truth, that *cleanliness is almost next to godliness*.

A house thus directed fills the mind with comfort and good humour, and these beget tranquility and ease.

As soon as the idea of the *Alehouse* enters the imagination of a poor man, from that moment he is undone. All domestic fidelity, every moral virtue, every connection which arises from social conjugal gratitude, every advantage which accrues to the community, are for ever gone, and lost in oblivion. If the labour of the hands supplies no more than a sufficiency for strong beer and spiritous liquors, the family, if there is no wife, must be supported by the Poor Rates, and miserable must be her situation if there is one, as the ragged, helpless babes are solely to depend on her care and industry for relief.

But suppose a case, neither fictitious nor even unusual: It is, that the husband loves strong drink, and the wife takes delight in her short stuff. Can there be a more poignant picture of misery and deformity? The man and wife, devoid of that reason and na-

tural capacity bestowed on them by providence, their constitution impaired, their morals corrupted, their minds debased, their poor starving, puny, half begotten children crying for bread, and left to the very, very tender mercy of Overseers, whose compassionate landlords have obliged them to discharge the Poor Rates.

May heaven defend us from such dismal objects, such complicated evils, or in other words, may the Legislature never more indulge the magistrates with a power of issuing forth so extensive a calamity, as that of a licence to keep an Alehouse in a country parish. That very great man Sir William Blackstone, in his Commentaries,\* has these words, viz. “ There is not a more necessary, or a more certain maxim in the frame and constitution of society, than that every individual must contribute his share, in order to the well being of the community; and surely, he must be very deficient in a sound policy, who suffers one half of a parish to continue idle, dissolute, and unemployed, then forms visionary schemes, and at length is amazed to find, that the industry of the other half is not able to maintain the whole.” Thus far that very learned author; give me leave to add, that all schemes for the maintaining and setting the poor to work, must be visionary, must be

useless, and without any salutary purpose or effect, as long as Alehouses continue to rob the poor of that gain and profit, which arise from their labour, and which otherwise would, and which always ought, to be the support of himself and family: and the poor laborious honest housekeeper, who with the utmost difficulty contributes perhaps a fourth of his small landed income to the Poor Rates, and almost consumes himself and family, by parsimony, œconomy, and hard labour, always must bear the heat and burthen of the day, as long as those who are supported by that very Poor Rate, are permitted to riot in drunkenness, sloth, and idleness, together with the dreadful debauch and excess of the Alehouse.

Gentle reader, farewell; if thou art of the same opinion as I am in these matters, God bless thee; if not, thou hast my very friendly benevolence; go thy way, enjoy thyself, and thy own mind; but be sure, take up thy residence for one week only, Sunday not excepted, in some Country Alehouse, and verily thou wilt find, that the points which I have here briefly delivered unto thee, are no fictions.

F I N I S.





